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American Progress:

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE YOUNG MEN'S MERCANTILE LIBRARY

ASSOCIATION OF CINCINNATI,

DECEMBER 8, 1846.

BY GAMALIEL BAILEY, JR.

CINCINNATI:

Printed and Published by

EDWIN SHEPARD, No. 11 COLUMBIA STREET.

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Cincinnati, Dec. 11, 1846.

GAMALIEL BAILEY, JR. — *Dear Sir:* — The pleasure which the perusal of your Address on American Progress would afford, induces us to request its publication. Those of us who heard it, desire to preserve the valuable information it contained, while others of us who were prevented by the inclemency of the evening from being present, are anxious to see that which is everywhere so highly spoken of.

Very respectfully, your friends,

W. GREENE,
S. S. L'HOMMEDIEU,
C. D. COFFIN,
W. D. GALLAGHER,
R. BUCHANAN,
J. M. McCULLOUGH,
ROLAND G. MITCHELL,
C. DONALDSON,
S. P. CHASE,
S. I. KELLOGG,
JOSEPH LONGWORTH,
JAMES PULLAN,
JAMES W. TAYLOR,
B. STORER.

ROWLAND ELLIS,
JAMES JOHNSTON,
JOHN W. HARTWELL,
ROBERT CRAWFORD,
GEO. CRAWFORD,
E. D. MANSFIELD,
R. CAMERON,
J. R. CORAM,
THOS. H. MINOR,
THOS. SHERLOCK,
W. STEPHENSON,
W. F. JOHNSON,
ROBERT BOAL,

Cincinnati, Dec. 15, 1846.

MESSRS. GREENE, L'HOMMEDIEU, COFFIN, and others:—

Gentlemen: — The Lecture to which you so kindly refer, is at your disposal. Nothing but an indisposition to say *no* to friends whom I value too much, needlessly to disoblige, could have induced my consent to its publication.

Respectfully,

G. BAILEY, JR.,

AMERICAN PROGRESS.

[The following Lecture was prepared while its Author was an invalid, delivered just on the eve of his removal from Cincinnati, and printed after his departure. The statistical character of a large portion of it, rendered careful revision greatly desirable; but this, owing to the circumstances above named, was impossible. Nevertheless, the statements made in the Lecture, it is believed, will be found to be correct, in all material points.]—THE AUTHOR.

IT is the tendency of the Reformers of a Country—the pioneers of its progressive movements—so to concentrate their attention on its evil characteristics, as to overlook in it what is valuable. Contemplating the good they would obtain for it, and mortified at the distance it falls short, they too often yield to the illusion that it is receding, instead of advancing; and in this way, the grandest of all sentiments,—a profound devotion to absolute Truth,—is perverted to the injury of another feeling, far less exalted, it is true, but still noble in its nature, and the source of many illustrious deeds—the *Love of Country*.

What does a benevolent Philosophy teach? Cast your eye back over the records of the past: mark the slow, laborious, almost imperceptible progress of Humanity—its ever-changing prospects—its sudden recessions—its inexplicable advances—how, after an apparent relapse into Barbarism, it would emerge under a loftier form, upon higher ground, sweeping the horizon with a more comprehensive gaze, and treading with a firmer step. Your own country, on a smaller scale, but exem-

plifies the history of the race. Good and evil have been mixed: progress and apostasy have been striving for the mastery: at times the struggle has seemed doubtful; but in the end, Truth has triumphed, though by the hardest, and there has been advancement.

Having by such views quickened your Patriotism and revived your hopes, then erect the standard of Absolute Right, and the glaring defects of your country, when thus tested, will restrain pride, take down the extravagance of hope, and provoke to untiring effort for its reform.

Despair, like the Dead Sea, can sustain no living thing in its depths. Bereave a man of hope, make him believe that he is utterly worthless, and you have taken one way to accomplish his ruin. He who has a Future may reform: he who has both a Past and Future may hope for perfection. How the soul must be energized that can look back upon a pathway adorned by the evidences of its good deeds! While it humbles itself in the presence of the Infinite Good, such retrospection awakens self-respect, begets elevation of sentiment, reduces the power of evil motive, and stimulates to nobler activity.

There is another feeling, analogous to this, but which is continually liable to perversion—a regard for ancestry. The apostate from all goodness, who seeks to hide his moral deformity in the blaze of ancestral glory, is a fool: his own evil deeds are only deepened in their shadows by the light emanating from the lives of his forefathers. But he, whose acts have rendered him a blessing to his country or mankind, has a property-right in the accumulated reputation of an illustrious ancestry; and must derive a greatness of thought and dignity of spirit from his honorable associations with the Past.

What is true of an Individual in these cases, is true of a Nation. A nation must think well of itself, before it can perform any thing respectable. Undermine its self-respect, debase it in its own estimation, and you remove one of the strongest restraints on evil conduct, one of the most powerful incentives to an honorable career. Persuade a whole people that they are mean, dishonest, insignificant, and they will be very apt to become so, if they are not. Let them believe themselves too honorable

to do a base action, and that very belief will prove a conservative influence. The bitter denunciations directed by a portion of the Press against the repudiating States of this Union, denunciations unsoftened by a single expression of confidence in their reviving virtue, or hope of the prospective discharge of their obligations, have done infinitely more harm than good. You cannot elevate men by trampling them under foot.

Again : let a nation be able to appeal to a Past of many centuries, marked by deeds of heroism, or acts of inestimable value to the cause of Liberty and Justice, amid the scenes of which move numerous actors, eminent for their integrity, their intellectual grandeur, their self-sacrificing devotion to their countrymen or their race, and it can hardly fail to become great-minded. It will feel that it has a glorious name to sustain. All the goodness and greatness which have signalized its Past, are the heritage of its Present. The reputation won by its great men in all ages becomes in a certain sense the property of every citizen, however humble ; and, though not a Hampden or Wilberforce himself, he cannot forget that he is their countryman. Thus the prophets of a nation may depart, but their mantles fall upon the People.

Often have we been struck at the lofty style in which English writers talk of their country. Take an example from a late number of the Foreign Quarterly Review :

“The heart of England is large enough for every thing. It is our duty to diffuse knowledge over the whole world. It would indeed seem to be that it was for this purpose we were raised up. Our industry, our trade, our political greatness, our struggles, victories and conquests, advantageous to us in a secular point of view, may be still more advantageous to others. We are but the carriers of the seeds of civilization, we bear forth the sword to protect our commerce, and our commerce itself is designed, perhaps, only as a raft to float the germs of polished and civilized life to the remotest and most obscure corners of the earth.”

This man writes under the inspiration of the Past. He remembers what England has done, and his Imagination

dilates with glorious visions of what she is yet destined to accomplish.

Americans too can point to a Past, though a brief one. Whatever deeds of note they have done, whatever reputation won, are of recent date. There are hoary-headed men among us who were present at the birth of this nation. No wonder that we have more national *Vanity* than *Pride*. As a People, we are sensitive to comment, because not exactly certain of our standing. Half a century, we fear, is not long enough for us to have formed a character as fixed, to have won a renown as world-wide, to have established a position as unquestionable, as belong to the older and leading nations of Europe.

True, by the tie of relationship, we have some share in the fame of the Anglo-Saxon race, but it is a small one. We have only a remote claim to participate in any credit belonging to the achievements of that race in England. To all intents and purposes, we are a new, distinct people—a compound of different races—and we live in a new country, under peculiar institutions.

What has been the result of this mixture of races? Is this Western hemisphere as favorable to the development of man, as the Eastern? What has been the operation of Democratic Institutions upon the Progress of this nation?

These are questions of profound interest; but our history, though a short one, will aid us in their solution. This history records a progress such as the world has scarcely witnessed—a progress which I shall rapidly survey under the following heads :—

TERRITORIAL EXTENSION, POPULATION, COMMERCE, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS,
POST OFFICE ACCOMMODATION, EDUCATION, RELIGION.

1. *Territorial Extension*.—The Revolutionary Patriots, far-seeing as they were, had no adequate idea of the future greatness of the empire, whose foundations they were laying. The Treaty by which Britain recognized our independence, circumscribed us within narrow bounds. While the Great Lakes defined our limits at the North, the Mississippi shut us

in on the West, and at the South, the boundary was the 31st parallel, north latitude. The free navigation of the great river of the West was also secured to us, so far as England could do it; but Spain, then occupying a lofty position in the Old World, was the owner of the Floridas, and of both shores of the Mississippi, below the 31st degree of latitude, so that our commerce in that direction was completely at her mercy. This was not all. That haughty and selfish Power would not acknowledge the Treaty which secured the Mississippi as our western boundary, but was anxious to hem in our territory by the Alleghanies. For fifteen years a constitutional struggle was kept up between that country and the United States, the utmost demanded by the latter, being, the recognition of the Mississippi as our Western limit, the concession of the free navigation of that river to the Gulf, and a free port of deposit for the merchandize and products of the West. At last, the American Government succeeded in gaining every one of these points, but not until the belligerent demonstrations of the hardy settlers of the West had alarmed Spain for the safety of her possessions, and that too at the very moment, when by a decisive blow from Revolutionary France, she was torn from the alliance of England, and compelled to feel that her greatness had departed.

The State papers on this important question were exceedingly able. Although the statesmen of those days seemed to think our empire forever bounded by the Mississippi, and to regard with indifference the possession of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico by a Foreign Power, they had clear views of the capabilities of the West. In a letter of instructions sent by Congress to Mr. Jay, in the year 1780, occurs the following remarkable passage :

“In a very few years, after peace shall have taken place, this country will certainly be overspread with inhabitants. In like manner, as in all new settlements, agriculture, not manufactures, will be their employment. They will raise wheat, corn, beef, pork, tobacco, hemp, flax, and, in the Southern parts, perhaps rice and indigo, in great quantities.”

! Recollect—this was written sixty-six years ago, almost before a settlement had been made beyond the Alleghanies; and yet these clear-sighted men predicted the growth of nearly every one of the staples by which this region is now characterized!

But, there is a limit to human sagacity. In the year 1790, a long letter of instructions was forwarded to Mr. Carmichael, our Minister at the Court of Spain, in which numerous arguments were briefly sketched, to be used in the negotiation concerning the free navigation of the Mississippi. Among others, a guaranty was offered to Spain of her possessions beyond the Mississippi; and the following points were insisted upon:—

“Safer for Spain that we should be her neighbor than England—

“Conquest not in our principles—inconsistent with our Government—

“Not our interest to cross the Mississippi for ages:—

“And will never be our interest to remain connected with those who do!”

And to show the stress laid upon the clause—“not our interest to cross the Mississippi for ages”—it was placed conspicuously in italics!

In *half* an age from the date of this remarkable declaration, what do we see? Four new and powerful States “across” the Mississippi, with a population of a million of souls; and at this very hour, the dust is rolling up from the track beaten by the American emigrants as they sweep through the passes of the Rocky Mountains to take possession of the shores of the Pacific?

To complete this part of the subject, a few words are necessary in relation to the acquisition of Louisiana. We are apt to laud the wisdom of the Administration under which the purchase of Louisiana was effected; but it may not be known to all in this audience that that immense country was in reality forced upon us. About the year 1800, it is supposed, France concluded with Spain the secret treaty, by which she secured the ownership of Louisi-

ana. It was not made known, however, till after the ratification of the peace, or rather truce, of Amiens. The Government of the United States became justly alarmed. From the debility and inertness of Spain, nothing was to be apprehended; but the ambition of Napoleon, then at peace with the world, and left free to meditate the building up of an immense empire in the interior of this continent, which in any future struggle with Great Britain, would secure him the ascendancy, awakened the profoundest anxiety in the American Government. The perpetual occlusion of the commerce of the Western settlers, by French monopoly of the Mississippi river, was clearly foreseen. It was understood that this territory had cost France 100,000,000 francs, and it was not to be supposed, that such an outlay had been made for nothing. Accordingly, our Ministers in Paris were instructed to procure, if possible, a cession of New Orleans and the Floridas, and the establishment of the Mississippi as the boundary between this country and Louisiana. Remember — this was so late as the year 1803, and under the Administration of Mr. Jefferson, whose views of policy were certainly as comprehensive as those of any statesman of his day. No one seemed to understand the vital importance of securing the entire Valley of the Mississippi, and ridding the Nation of any European Power on its Western borders.

The instructions of Mr. Jefferson were, to purchase a small portion of Louisiana; and for this he was willing to concede to France the most extravagant privileges; even a perpetual guaranty of her territories beyond the Mississippi river.

But Providence controls the affairs, and shapes the destinies of nations. The peace of Amiens was abruptly terminated. Napoleon found England again upon his hands. His magnificent projects in the New World at once fell to the ground. Britain threatened Louisiana, and his Treasury was empty. What to do? was the question. If he could dispose of Louisiana to the United States, he would secure neutrality in that quarter, disappoint Great Britain, and replenish his Treasury.

When, therefore, the American Ministers proposed to pur-

chase a part of Louisiana, they were asked what they would give for the whole,—and at last the ultimatum of Napoleon was announced—he would sell all or none. From the necessity of the case, then, they concluded to transcend their instructions, assume the responsibility, and form a treaty for the purchase of the *whole* of Louisiana. Thus, by a remarkable conjunction of circumstances, against the policy of our Government, the whole of the vast Valley of the Mississippi became ours, and our Western boundary was carried to the Pacific ocean.

Now, we have an ample basis for an empire. With a territory bounded on the North by a chain of inland seas, on the South, by the Gulf of Mexico; washed on the East by the Atlantic ocean, on the West, by the Pacific; with a soil of unsurpassed fertility, ranging through every variety of climate; with navigable rivers, penetrating every part of the interior; commanding on one side the trade of Europe and Africa, on the other, the commerce of Asia and the Islands of the Sea; with no power on our borders that can throw an obstacle in the way of our progress,—our position is such as no other Nation has ever occupied.

But, by no wisdom of man, by no device of statesmanship, has our territory been carried to its present extent. All human agencies have, clearly, been subordinate, while empire has been given us by an overruling Providence. From this remark, I beg leave to except the recent annexation of foreign territory to this Union.

2. *Population*.—I proceed next to notice our progress in respect to population. Population is power. Howsoever the truth of this maxim may be affected by peculiar circumstances, in this country it is true without qualification; and it must be true in all countries, where the wants of the people have not transcended the productive power. It is one of the great sources of wealth, the real element of Dominion, and its rapid increase is, in most cases, the clearest evidence of high prosperity. There are, indeed, eccentric theorists among us who, in their blind devotion to the nar-

row politics of the South Carolina School, deny these self-evident truths; but it is enough to know that they also repudiate the great doctrines which constitute the ground-work of all Democratic institutions.

In the year 1755, the population of the colonies, which subsequently declared their independence, was 980,000. In 1840, eighty-five years from that time, it had risen to seventeen millions, and by the year 1855, a century from that date, it will have advanced beyond twenty-five millions! The average increase of the people of Great Britain every ten years, is, 15 per cent—of the people of the United States 32 or 33 per cent. In 1801, the population of the former country was 10,942,616, in 1841, 18,656,000; in 1851, it will be 21,885,000; so that in half a century, it will not quite have doubled itself. But in the United States we more than double our numbers every quarter of a century; so that while, in half a century, Great Britain has been augmenting her population not quite two-fold, we have increased ours more than four-fold! This ratio of increase will continue for at least the next fifty years, so that at the close of the nineteenth century, the population of this country will have reached seventy-five millions! Ere that time Oregon will have been peopled, steamers will be plying regularly between Columbia and Whampoa, and we shall be in the receipt of the latest Peking fashions, six days after their first appearance at Astoria.

3. *Commerce.*—Travellers from abroad are in the habit of representing Americans as a grave, utilitarian people, with little of the graceful or romantic in their composition; and they charge this as a serious defect of character, without once adverting to the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed. The settlers of this country were obliged to become men of iron; and their first attention necessarily was directed to the material development and improvement of their new inheritance. They had to watch against famine, endure privation, struggle with the savage, hew their way through forests, level mountains, erect highways through swamps and over ravines; to build homes in an unknown wilderness, supply them with the necessaries of life, and then defend them

against treachery. The rich and varied soil, giving birth to a superabundance of every variety of products, the vast extent of sea-coast abounding in commodious harbors, and penetrated in all directions by navigable rivers, stretching far into the interior, naturally made them and their descendants a commercial people; while the extraordinary energy infused into the masses by freedom from oppressive monopolies, their political and practical equality of rights, and their equal chances of obtaining wealth and distinction, gave to their commercial enterprise a character of daring, of heroism, hitherto unknown.

In the year 1771, the total amount of tonnage owned by the Colonies, was but 100,000; and the value of their exports, about seven hundred thousand dollars. In 1789, the tonnage had grown to 201,652. That of Great Britain and Ireland, in the year 1800, was 1,855,879, nine times greater. But after a race of forty-five years, how stands the account? The American Union has become the second maritime power in the world, possessing a tonnage of 2,416,399, twelve times more than it owned half a century ago; while Great Britain, in forty-five years, has increased hers to but 3,044,392, only two-fifths. That is, the tonnage of this country in fifty-five years has grown at the rate of 1098 per cent., that of Britain, in forty-five years, at the rate of only 64 per cent!

But, it is in the Internal Commerce of the States, that Progress has been most striking. In the beginning of this century, an immense solitude lay stretched out between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains — the home of the wandering savage and buffalo. Through it rolled the Mississippi, Father of Waters, constituting, with his tributaries, an extent of navigation equal to twelve thousand miles; draining one million three hundred thousand square miles, or one twenty-eighth part of the surface of the earth. And it seemed destined to roll on in eternal silence. The stealthy canoe might be seen, darting across its dark bosom, or an occasional keel-boat laboring along amid "tangled undergrowth and miry swamp;" but no sounds of busy commerce echoed along its shores. Away to the North, slumbered the great

Lakes, unexplored, skirting our shores for two thousand miles, with a coast of five thousand miles in extent; embosomed in a country of boundless productiveness, and capable of a commerce of incalculable value. Not a sail whitened their bosom, no steamboat vexed their quiet, but the pirogue of the French fur-trader was the chief carrier of their petty traffic.

It is stated that in 1794, four keel-boats, each of twenty tons, and occupying one month in going and returning, performed all the carrying trade between Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. Traveling in those times was not quite so tame a business as it is now. In advertising these boats, the *Centinel* of the North West Territory, of January 4th, 1794, remarks—"No danger need be apprehended from the enemy, as every person on board will be under cover, made proof against rifle or musket balls, with convenient port holes for firing out of!"

In 1802, the first Government vessel appeared on Lake Erie. In 1811, the first steamboat was launched at Pittsburgh. In 1818, the first steamboat was built on Lake Erie. And now what do we see? The solitary places made glad. The fires of civilization burning in every valley, upon every hill top, along every shore. The treasures of a continent unlocked. A world of life, where there was a wilderness. Steamboats descending from the Falls of St. Anthony, two thousand miles to the Gulf of Mexico; steamboats ascending to the Great Falls of the Missouri, four thousand miles from the Gulf; steamboats thronging the Ohio and its tributaries, an extent of 5,000 miles of navigable waters; palaces of steamboats darkening the Great Lakes. It is computed on good authority that at this time there are 750 steamboats on the western rivers, a number nearly equal to all the steamboats of Great Britain a few years since; and the commerce of these rivers and lakes cannot be less in annual value than three hundred millions of dollars.

4. *Internal Improvements.*—But in no way has American energy manifested itself more wonderfully, than in works of Internal Improvement. These are on a gigantic scale, in

perfect keeping with the physical features of the country. It would seem as if man had been laboring to rival the grandeur of Nature. (Will the audience pardon my frequent reference to statistics: I cannot do justice to this subject by dealing in mere figures of speech.)

In the year 1839, the total length of canals constructed in England was 2400 miles. I have not been able to find any record of later date; but, it may be presumed, from the railroad mania which has overspread that country, that there has been comparatively little canal extension since then. But, on summing up an authentic table of the canals in the United States in 1845, I find that their total length is 4006 miles, exceeding the length of the English canals by 1600 miles!

As it respects railroads, the contrast is still greater. The Paris *Constitutionnel*, recently furnished various statistics concerning railways in Europe and the United States, at the close of the year 1845. The American Union ranks first in the extent of its railroads, England next, though far behind. And yet that paper is in error, in assigning to the United States some eight hundred miles of railway less than are now open for travel. Correcting the table in this particular, I present some of the results, using English, instead of French, measure.

At the close then, of the year 1845, the total length of railroad was, in England, 2,068 miles, in all Europe, including England, 5,059 miles; in the United States alone, 5,091 miles,—a greater extent than in England and all Europe.

This is progress! Where are we? Improvements are sweeping by us with lightning-speed. In 1825, the first locomotive in England traveled at the rate of 6 miles an hour. In 1829, the speed of 15 miles per hour was reached; in 1834, 20 miles; in 1839, 37 miles; and at this moment there are locomotives running 42 miles per hour. Who shall set limits to their speed? We go now from Boston to New York in a few hours. It is a pleasant day's ride from New York to Washington. You leave Washington on the morning of one day, and in the evening of the next are at Pittsburgh.

A day or two's journey takes you from New York to Detroit. Let us see how our fathers got along. Some editorial lover of olden times falls in with the Boston News Letter, dated September 15, 1763, published at Boston by Richard Draper, printer to the Governor and Council. The paper is a great curiosity. It mentions letters received at New York, September 4th, dated Detroit, August 8th — nearly one month on the way — and they too were sent by *express*. Speculations in flour in those days were not very profitable. The latest dates mentioned — (recollect the paper is published in Boston, and dated September 15th,) — are from Newport, R. I., September 10th; Philadelphia, September 1st; Fort Pitt, (now Pittsburgh,) August 12th — one month and three days from Pittsburgh to Boston! Who after this will laugh incredulously at the idea of a railroad to the Oregon, and a journey from New York to the Pacific in half a dozen days? In the Past is the promise of the Future? The opposite shores of this continent will be bound together by bands of iron, and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans shall yet be one.

What has hitherto been presented, illustrates our material progress. But, it may be said — all your energies have been concentrated in this direction to the neglect of higher, more commanding interests. You have bestowed sufficient attention on the earthly home which the good God has given you — the tabernacle for your flesh — but how have you supplied the wants of the moral man?

Certainly, had there been some neglect in this respect, it could scarcely have been wondered at; but let us again appeal to facts, to determine to what extent provision has been made for the claims of our higher nature.

What I may now have to say, will be comprised under the three heads — Post Office Accommodation, Education, Religion.

5. *Post Office Accommodation.* — Many are apt to think that the Post Office concerns chiefly the interests of the mercantile classes; when, in fact, it is the greatest, most vital public convenience, provided by the Government. Did Human Government do nothing more than supply Post Office facilities to the People, (supposing they could be furnished in no other

way,) it would be worth all the taxes we pay for its support. What were the power of the Press without the Post Office? What, the accumulated intelligence of your cities, without the mail carrier? The Post Office plays precisely the same part in the world of ideas, that roads, canals, seas and oceans, do in the world of trade. It furnishes highways for the free, universal transmission of Thoughts, Sentiments, Affections. Without it, no nation, at this age, could maintain its identity, advance its civilization, or even perpetuate its existence. Have Americans neglected this important interest? Let us see.

The first post established in this country was in New York, in the year 1710. The first Congress, under the New Constitution, made provision for a Post Office Department,—and the following year, 1790, the number of Post Offices was 75, the number of miles of Post roads, 1875, the revenue, \$38,000. Half a century from that time, that is, in 1840, the number of Post Offices had multiplied from 75 to 13,488, the number of miles of post roads from 1,875 to 155,739, and the revenue had increased from \$38,000 to four million and a half dollars! But it is impossible fully to appreciate even this wonderful fact, without some comparison. Again, we take Great Britain as a standard, ranking as she does, at the head of the nations of the earth. True, her bounds are narrower, and the same expenditure on Post Office routes is not needed in that kingdom, as in this country. But the comparison will serve to show how well we have met the more pressing demands upon us.

In 1845, the length of the mail routes in Great Britain and Ireland was 18,816 miles, and the total annual transportation, 15,009,165; while in the United States, the length of the routes was 143,940 miles, and the total annual transportation, 35,634,269.

6. *Education.*—Nor have Americans neglected their educational wants; and in this matter they have shown their usual practical knowledge. Prussia treats its subjects as parts of a machine, hewing and fitting them merely that they may work well in the great wheel of state. Its system of education is, in itself, a Despotism, and it is designed to bulwark the

Despotism of the Sovereign Power. It may make good *subjects*, but not true *men*. Great Britain, on the other hand, has not yet been able to devise any system for educating her People. The claims of the establishment and the principles of the dissenting interest are always in fierce conflict, so that it seems almost impossible to agree upon any common plan of secular education. At this moment they are discussing with great earnestness questions which have been settled in these States long since, to the satisfaction of all sects and parties. In this country the Legislative power has interfered just far enough to shape Public Sentiment, and consolidate a system, which, for its successful operation, depends, not upon Force, but upon Public Sentiment; and in our Public Schools we have lost sight of all sectarian differences, and political animosities. We have carefully respected the rights of conscience—we have exercised toleration—we have separated things having no natural connection—governmental interference has been allowed to stimulate, but not *substitute*, individual effort—and our maxim has been that it is infinitely more important that the *many* be *well* educated than that the *few* be *highly* educated.'

What are some of the results? The proportion of the whole white population of this country at school in the year 1840, was 1 in 7.

(I blush on being reminded by this word, *white*, of the dark blot on our National Escutcheon—the one great Foe to American Progress. The whole mass of slaves, as the audience is aware, are excluded by the Anti-Democratic laws of a portion of this Union from the benefits of Education, so that they cannot be taken into the account in this comparison.)

But, I was stating that the proportion of the whole white population at school in 1840, was 1 in 7; or, if we confine our view to the free States alone, 1 in 5; or, if we limit it to New England and New York, 1 in 3 or 4; while the proportion in Scotland, famed for its education, is but one in ten; in England one in twelve; in Wales, one in twenty. Again, in 1840, of the adult white population in this coun-

try unable to read or write, the proportion was one in twenty-six; in the free States alone, one in forty-seven. But, how is it with England, whose tourists' are so fond of ridiculing the dead level of our Democratic intellect? According to the returns of the registrar-general, "ONE-HALF of the adult population of England and Wales is composed of persons unable to write their own names." I quote word for word from the Westminster Review, of September, 1846. Here is another passage from the same source:—"The returns state that out of 735,788 persons married during the years 1839, 1840 and 1841, 303,836 signed the marriage register with a *mark* only!"

It is not in the spirit of an inflated patriotism, or from the slightest disposition to disparage a foreign country, that these contrasts are drawn. I use them just as I would comparisons of free and slave States—for the sake of illustrating a principle. I cannot do justice to my subject without pursuing such a course.

7. *Religion*.—In relation to religion, it was my intention to enter into some details respecting its condition in this country, but I have not time. The statistics upon this subject, compiled by Messrs. Reed and Matheson, two English clergymen who traveled throughout the United States some twelve years ago, examining with critical eye its institutions and their workings, are all-conclusive. They demonstrate that, taking all States together, new and old, this country, in regard to the amount of its religious supplies, is far in advance of even Scotland, renowned as that country is for its religious habits—that in proportion to population, our ministers are more numerous, church accommodations more abundant, and the number of communicants far greater.

When captious tourists from abroad sneer at Americans, because they are not a very literary, highly polished people, they may reply by pointing to these facts. Our lot has been cast in the wilderness; we are just emerging from the smoke of our clearings; the savage war-whoop has scarcely died in the distance. If we cannot enact the gentleman or the

savan, it is because we are builders—builders of an empire—striving to lay deep, and broad, and strong, the foundations of an Indestructible Civilization in a New World.

I have thus rapidly glanced at the principal features of American Progress, the presentation of Facts having been the main business of this address. Were there time, it would be profitable to inquire into their philosophy: as it is, I cannot forbear a few words of comment. Always acknowledging the efficiency of an Overruling Providence, I remark, that the unexampled progress we have been contemplating, is the result of three facts or causes—the remarkable physical capacities of the Country, extraordinary energy in the People, and a peculiarly favorable system of Government. Dismissing further notice of the other causes, it may be said in relation to the third, that the great principle which lies at the foundation of our Government, is a chief element of our Prosperity—I mean, *the equality of all men in Natural rights*. Just so far as this Principle has been carried out, it has unfettered the Land, unbound its Cultivator, given to Labor its just reward, secured the Laborer against enervation, diffused a sense of Justice, established a feeling of security, awakened self-respect in the masses, unchained their energies, fired their hopes, developed all their enterprise. The rapidity with which this country has swept ahead of all others, in the respects I have indicated, is a triumphant demonstration of the Truth of the Democratic Principle, and the Falseness of every system or institution which repudiates it.

One brief glance now at the Future, and I shall have done.

At the end of this century, the Pacific shores of this North American continent will be the seat of a Civilization like that which now bears sway on the Atlantic coast. Rivers of the Oregon, the Bay of St. Francisco, the Colorado, the Gulf of California, will float a commerce as grand as that which now darkens the great inland seas on our North, and the rivers of the Mississippi valley. The buffalo will have disappeared; a few Indians may linger in the passes of the mountains; but the intervening prairies will swarm with the

Anglo-American tribes, and be dotted all over with the beautiful homes of civilization. Railroads and highways of all sorts will have bound the Atlantic and Pacific shores together with bands not to be broken; and a trip from Boston to Astoria will be no more thought of than was a journey from Boston to Cincinnati forty or fifty years ago. The Pacific ocean will groan under the commerce which shall then spread its sails between the Old and New Worlds; and the Islands of the sea will rejoice in the light of a Christian civilization.

Now, we may suppose this new world, thus peopled, to be existing under one Government; cemented together by identical institutions, language, customs; by the recollections of a common origin, a common history, sufferings and triumphs in common; by common interests and a reciprocal free commerce: or we may suppose it divided into two independent empires, Eastern and Western.

Should the former be the case, no military establishment would be required larger than the United States have now: there would be a Patriotism with no bounds but two oceans; Peace, perpetual over one quarter of the globe; a Civilization, harmonious in its sympathies and interests, unexampled in its development, enduring as the world itself.

Should the latter be the case, this continent would witness the re-enactment of the scenes which have made Europe reel to and fro under the shock of contending empires. We should have European civilization over again—with its enormous inequalities of condition; its warring interests; its hostile tariffs; its jealousies, intrigues, devouring ambition; its military establishments, all-grasping tyrants, poverty-stricken, humbled, and crushed People.

We say then, if this continent can be settled gradually, peacefully, honorably by the Anglo-American People; if it can be brought under one government; if the Federal Union, like the Bow of Promise, can span this immense aggregate of sea and river, wilderness and prairie, valley and mountain, in one embrace; who will not rejoice? Is such a prospect visionary? It is not—the dream may yet have a reality—but only on these conditions:

1st. That the General Government abstain from all class-legislation, from all interference with the domestic concerns of the States, from all intermeddling with a view to build up particular interests; and devote itself simply to its legitimate objects—the regulation of the relations of the country with other nations, and the execution of such necessary measures for the general welfare as Individual or State Enterprise is inadequate to carry out.

2ndly. *The extinction of Slavery.*—This Union, limited as it is, is placed in continual peril by this system. Already has it alienated the feelings of multitudes, North and South; engendered contrarious Interests which cannot be identified, dangerous Discords which cannot be healed, so long as it shall exist. The attempt to perpetuate a Union, with Slavery extended indefinitely over the Californias and the upper provinces of Mexico, would be an absurdity. The men who are most active in these schemes of slavery extension, *do not intend that the Union shall endure.*

The third condition is, that this continent be acquired gradually, peacefully, honorably, by the natural process of colonization, and assimilation. Once embarked on a career of conquest, the Union would be crushed under an-overgrown Military and Executive Power; and there would result a demoralization of the People subversive necessarily of Free Institutions.

Violence for a season may succeed, but of one thing we may be assured—should Providence educe Good from Evil, the aggressive nation need not expect to share in it. It may add to its Territory, it may augment its Power, it may accumulate Wealth, but the time will come when all these shall hang like mill stones about its neck dragging it down to Perdition. The extended *Territory* of Rome became its weakness—its vast Power destroyed its Liberties—its enormous Wealth debauched its manners, and annihilated its Moral Life. In achieving what it aimed at, it accomplished its own ruin.

The lessons of Philosophy should be listened to—and, one of its lessons is, that *retribution* sooner or later overtakes the wrong-doer, and that, however it may be with the *Individual*, it is in *this* world that *Nations* receive the punishment of

their sins. Anglo-Saxon civilization may be established by force over this continent—but that result may be achieved at the expense of the American Union. The Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, each in his turn, was used as a rod and an instrument in the hands of the Almighty—but each in his turn was broken in pieces.

Ambitious, violent, unjust, working against the Divine Government, the American People may be *used* in the advancement of great movements, though in the end their doom will be destruction; but, doing Justice, loving Mercy, and thus walking in harmony with the Divine Government, they may at once accomplish the most glorious ends, and be themselves crowned with glory!

NOTE.—[Since the foregoing Lecture was prepared, I have seen an elaborate article in a Foreign Review, furnishing rather later statistics in relation to Railroads; from which it would seem that the aggregate number of miles of railway in continental Europe is somewhat greater than I have reckoned it, in the text.]

THE AUTHOR.

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